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# Section One

## Planning Framework

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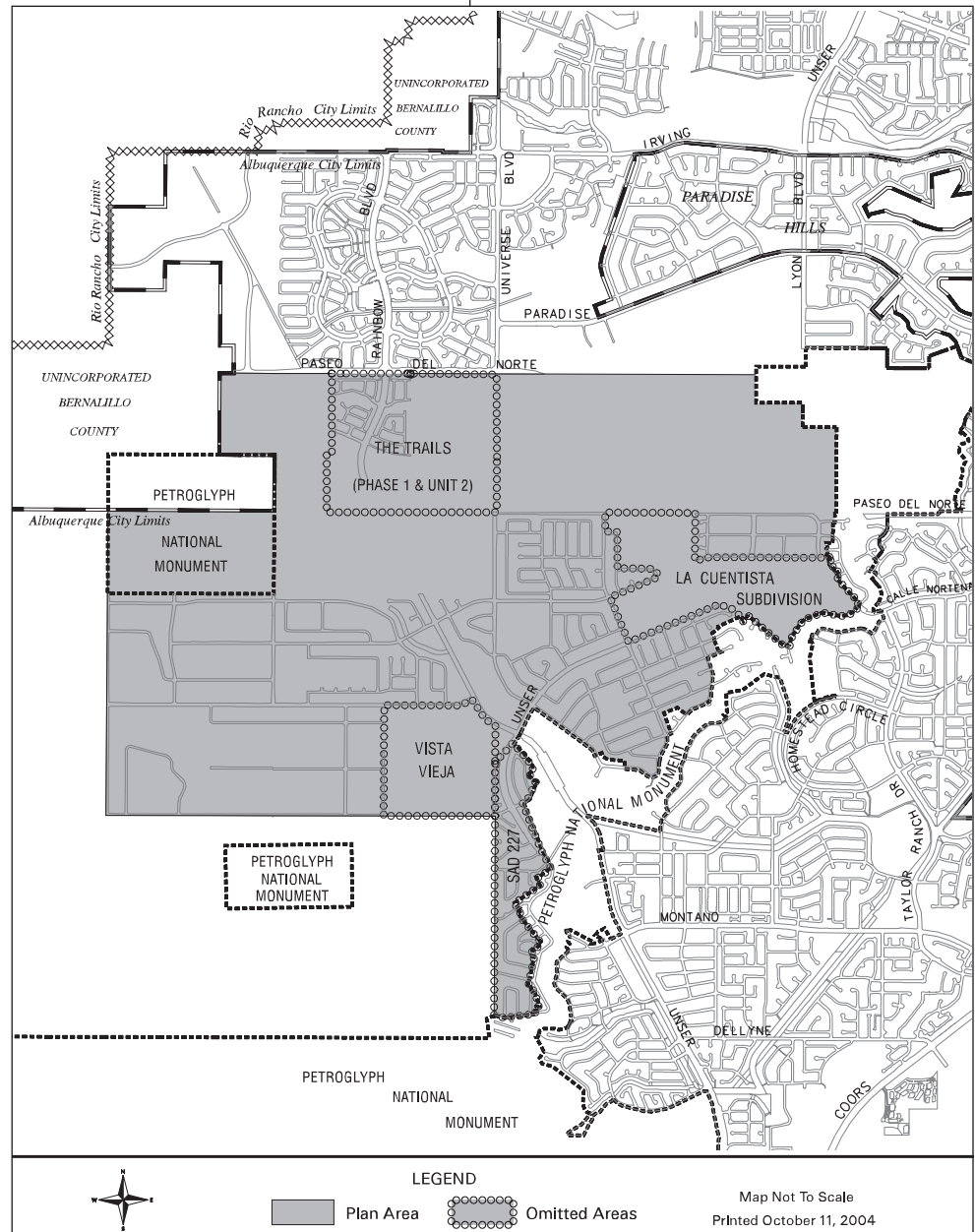
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## Conditions and Considerations

### 1. PLAN AREA

The Volcano Heights Plan Area (See **Exhibit 1 City Designated Plan Area Exhibit A to Legislation**) covers 3,532 acres. The area is surrounded on three sides by more than 7,000 acres of open space under City, State and Federal jurisdictions. The shape of the open space holdings includes large tracts and long, narrow bands of escarpment. The Plan Area includes portions of the land the US Congress set aside as Petroglyph National Monument (the “Monument”) in 1990. From east to west, the Plan Area extends from the volcanic Escarpment to the open space surrounding five dormant volcanoes. From north to south, the Plan Area extends from Paseo del Norte to city open space and the Monument.

**Exhibit 2 Jurisdictions and Built or Approved Projects** shows the relationship of the Plan Area to Albuquerque’s West Side jurisdictions and development patterns and shows existing and planned development projects. **Exhibit 3 Aerial Context and Roadway Network** provides an overview of the existing and proposed transportation system overlaid on an aerial view of the Plan Area and surroundings.



**Exhibit 1**  
City Designated Plan Area

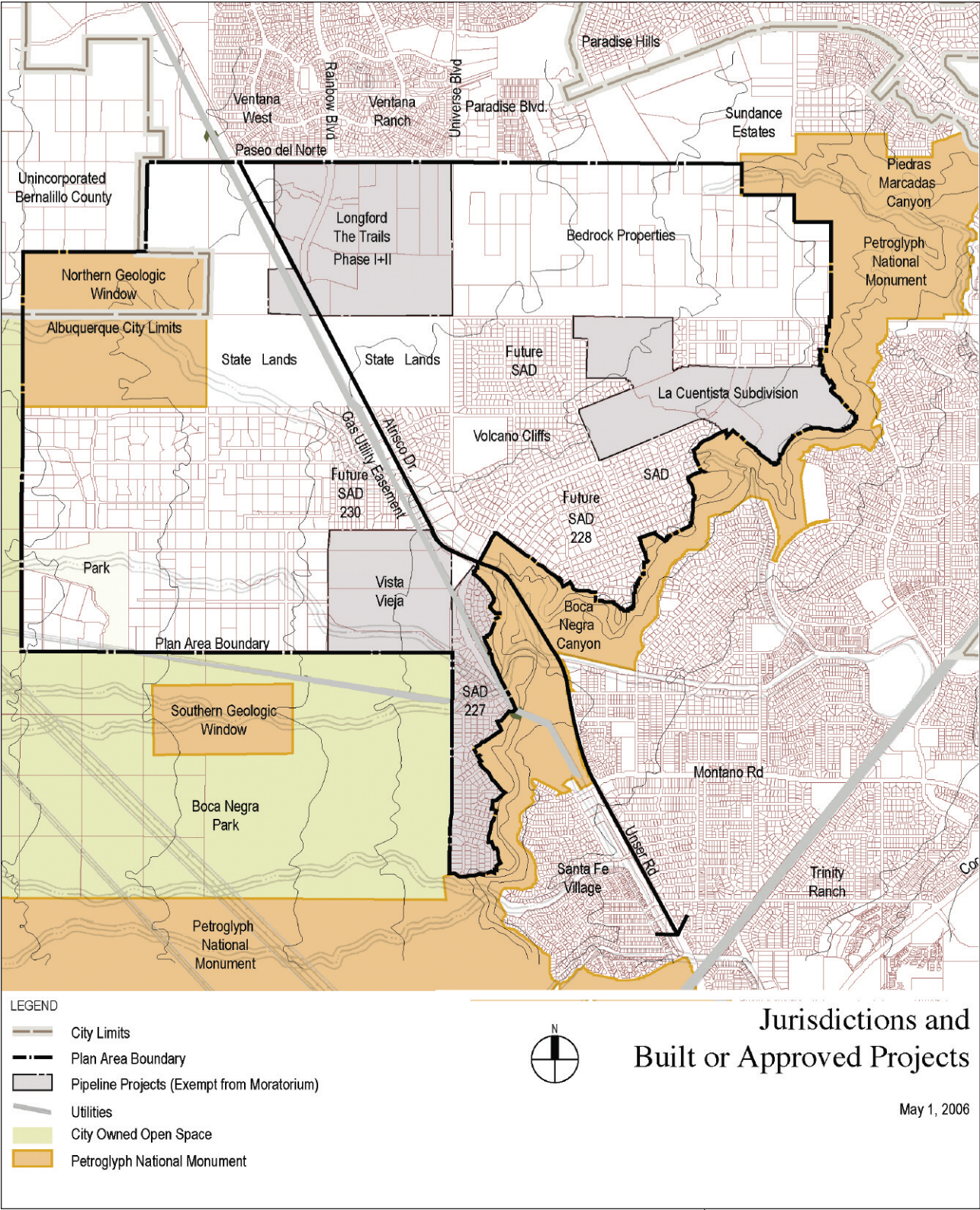


Exhibit 2



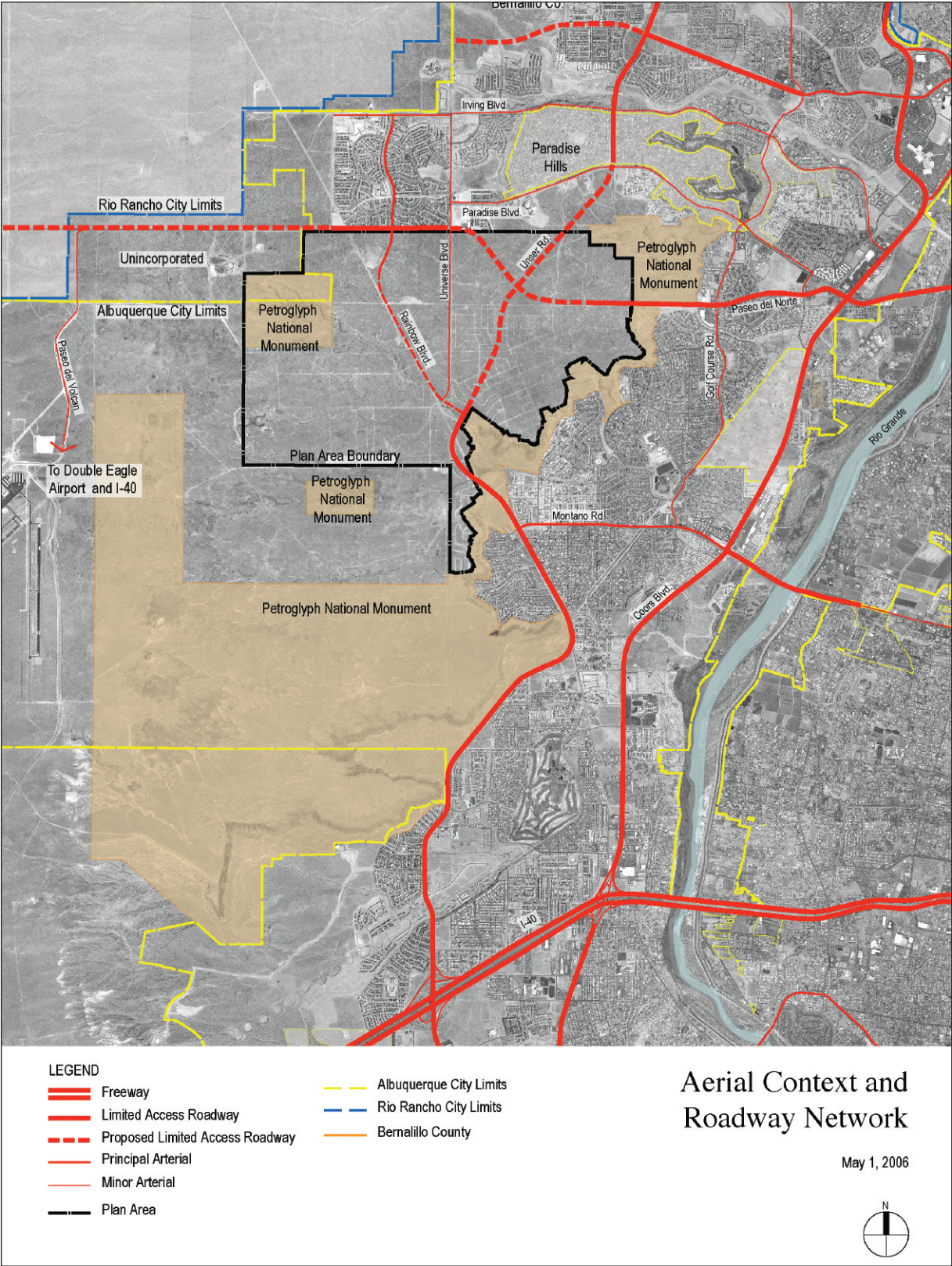


Exhibit 3



## 2. THE MEANING OF PLACE: NATURAL AND CULTURAL FEATURES

(See **Exhibit 4** *Natural and Cultural Features*)

Volcano Heights lies between publicly owned lands preserving the Escarpment and lands protecting the Volcanoes and Geologic Windows. Arroyos generally run west to east between these features.

Volcano Heights provides a unique portal into New Mexico's rich interplay of cultures. Most Albuquerque residents recognize the Monument as an important asset and associate it with the five volcanic cones and the 17-mile Escarpment containing petroglyphs.

There are more than 20,000 Petroglyphs dating from 700 to 3,000 years ago carved here and in other places within the Monument. A 2002 National Park Service ethnographic study—*“That Place People Talk About: The Petroglyph National Monument, Ethnographic Landscape Report,”* Anschuetz et. al., 2002, hereinafter referred to as “Anschuetz”) illuminates the still active religious and cultural value these sacred places hold for many Native Americans.

This rich document explores the meaning of the West Mesa volcanic area for Pueblo and other Native American and Hispanic people. Because of space limitations, the present document approaches the meaning of the West Mesa area from the Rio Grande Pueblos' perspective; the reader is encouraged to read the entire *Ethnographic Landscape Report*.

The Monument legal boundaries were influenced by financial resources available for land acquisition. For the Pueblos, however, the site encompasses the entire lava bed, the volcanoes' caves and shafts, the Petroglyphs, and additional features of comparable importance in meaning and use. As planners, residents, and visitors, our responsibilities to the Volcano Heights area are the same as to the National Monument. Anschuetz 3.31, 9.9 writes: “Land-use planning in the face of development, to be successful, needs to consider how to *sustain* extant landscape traditions within an ongoing historical process.”

### *Petroglyphs*

According to Anschuetz, the Petroglyphs focus Pueblo people's concentration and prayer. Not just realistic representations of specific animals or people, the images are used to transmit thought, energy, and learning across space and time into other dimensions within a defined and bounded world.

### *Shrines, Caves, Lava Tubes in Volcanoes, Recesses in the Escarpment Face, and Elsewhere*

Various other West Mesa sites function with the Petroglyphs as an interlocking system of spiritual communication. The lava tubes and caves near two northernmost Volcanoes west of the Plan Area contained shell beads, pendants, turquoise, hematite, selenite, mica, colored pebbles, prayer sticks, and feathers. These are places “where the world breathes” and prayers are directed. Arrangements of stones, boulders with pecked and ground facets, stone piles, prominent boulders, recesses in the Escarpment, or rock spires are similarly meaningful. (Anschuetz, 3.24-25) **See Exhibit 5** *Petroglyphs*

The Pueblo World is often depicted as a bowl in the landscape with the community's plaza at its center, extending to distant mountains, with upper and lower realms as the

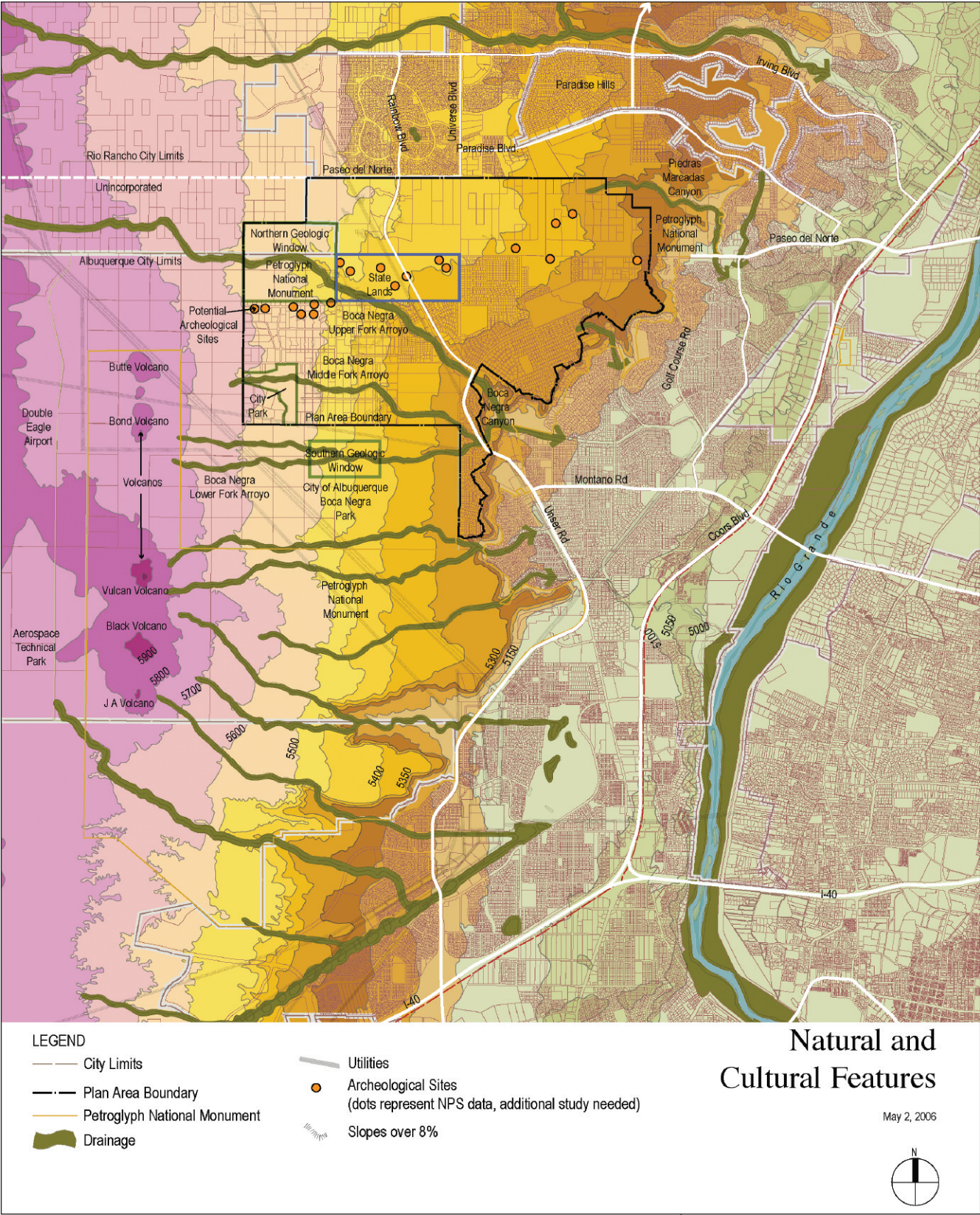
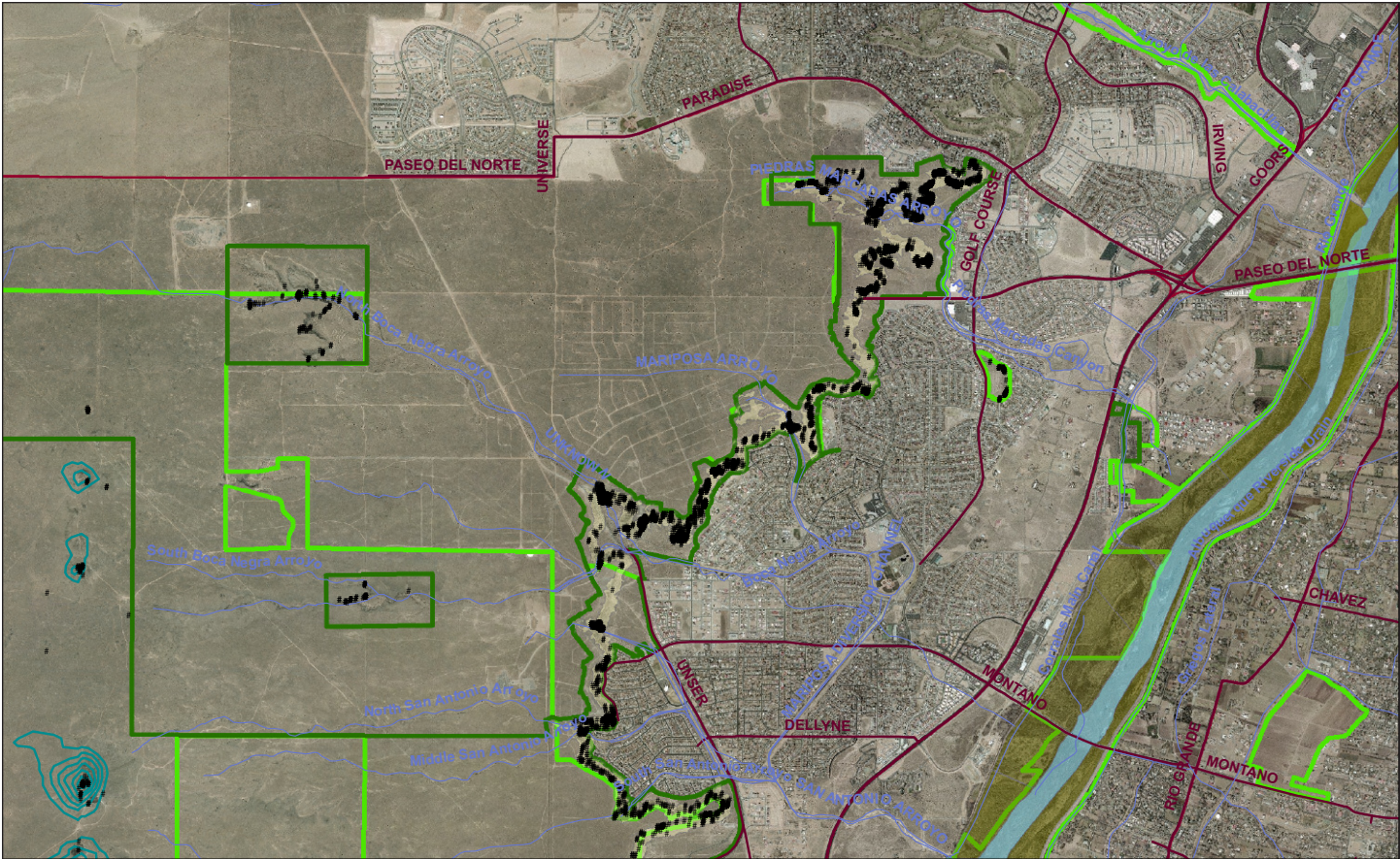


Exhibit 4



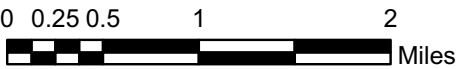


## Petroglyphs

### Legend

- # Petroglyph Sites
- Volcano
- Stream
- Escarpment
- Rio Grande
- Present-day Bosque
- City Open Space
- Petroglyph National Monument

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### Exhibit 5

places of the gods, the deceased, water, breath, transformation, and more. Along the Rio Grande, the West Mesa's Volcanic cones, the Escarpment, the Sandia Mountains and more distant mountains were the periphery of the former Pueblos' world. (Anschuetz, 3.3, 3.8, 3.14)

### *Plazas*

*Plazas* physically express the Pueblos' center and open the villages to the landscape. Pueblo people channel blessings across the landscape through shrines and special places, and the blessings intersect with the upper and lower worlds, where they are transformed and gain increased power. As they return to the people, these strengthened blessings renew the cycle of life from the plaza center. (Anschuetz, 3.8-3.12) **See Figure 1 Pueblo View** (3.13)

### *The Sandia Mountains*

On one edge of the bowl that forms the Pueblo World, the Sandias are the home for important shrines and the highest earth spirits, who protect the communities below and visit the West Mesa lava bed. (Anschuetz, 3.21-22)

### *Pathways*

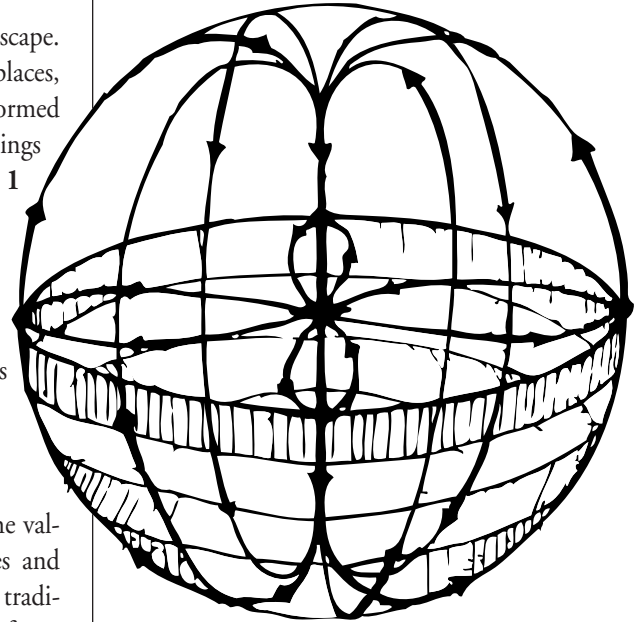
Trails connecting former villages along the Rio Grande with each other ran up the valley slopes and Escarpment, past the petroglyphs and shrines, to the volcanoes and mountains beyond. The trails were used for hunting, gathering, agricultural, and traditional and cultural activities. Because in Pueblo life, there is little separation of the functional from the spiritual, the paths form an interrelated flow of energy and movement along the trails that can be considered a ritual pilgrimage. (Anschuetz, 3.31, 3.33-34). **Exhibit 6 Paths** illustrates many of the paths in and around the Volcano Heights area so the reader may visualize the petroglyph concentrations on the Escarpment paths such as along the Boca Negra and the Piedras Marcadas arroyos that lead to the volcanic cones.

### *Significance*

Together, the elements described above constitute a world view that symbolizes a transformative healing process emanating from the West Mesa. In Pueblo terms, this is a significant place for reestablishing harmony with the environment, one another, and the spiritual dimensions of life. Pueblo members, at the hearing to designate the Monument, said: "We pray for peace, good health, harmony among all people, and a long and happy life." (Anschuetz, 3.45-46)

In terms of the Volcano Heights planning process and of the area's future, Pueblo members have recognized that change is part of life, but "it has to be transformed in terms of continuing," through "respect, connectedness—which is love." (Anschuetz, 3.15). The Volcano Heights Plan respects this intent in the following ways:

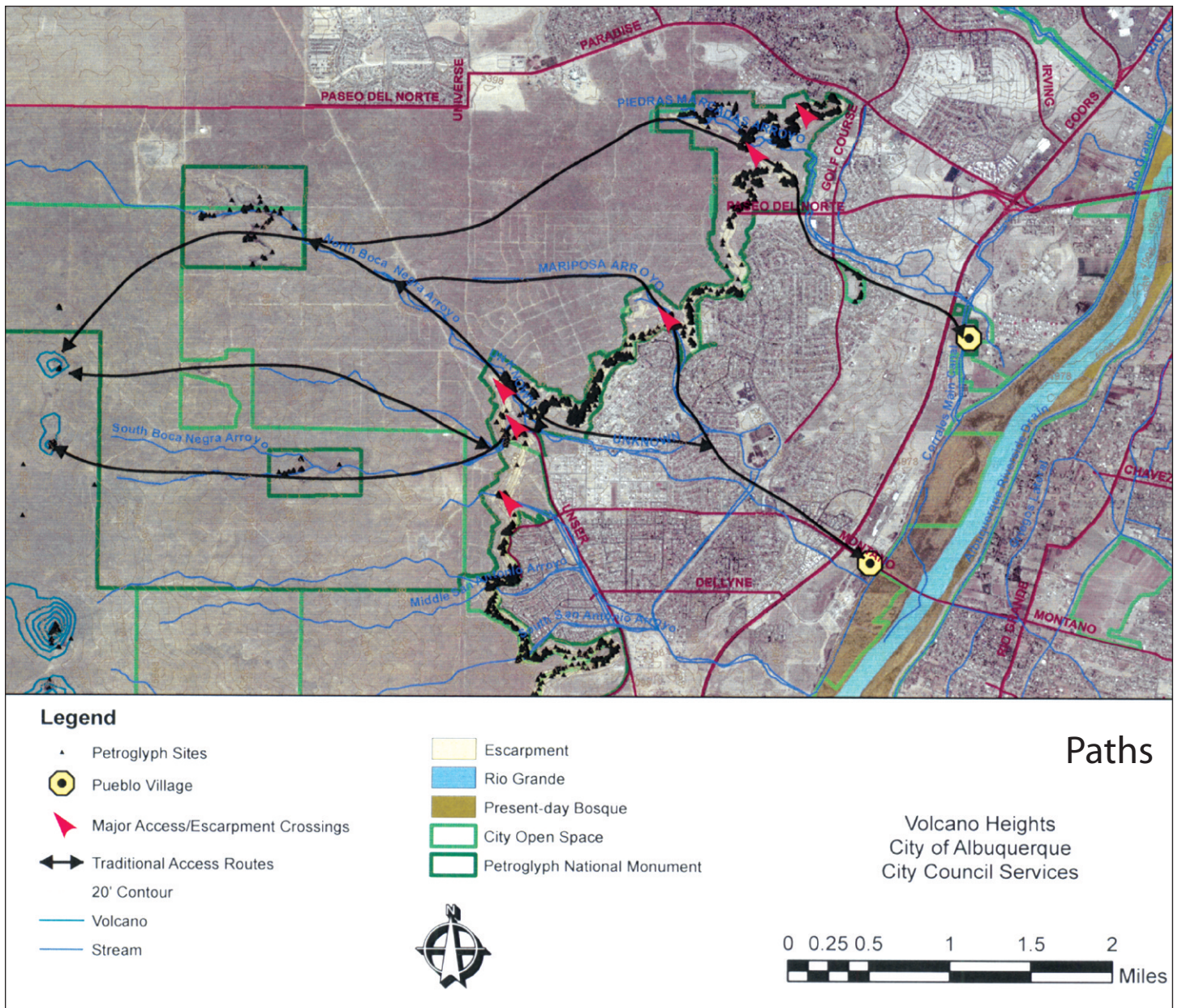
- Expanding the narrow edge of the Escarpment to allow more reflective space at a greater distance from the built environment;
- Maintaining the travel paths along the arroyo courses from the Pueblo sites on the Rio Grande valley floor, through the Escarpment, the Monument's North and Middle Geologic Windows, and to the Volcanic cones;



**Figure 1**  
**Pueblo View**

The movement of life energy throughout the realms of the Pueblo world. (from Wentzell 1990a: Figure 3-5).





- Protecting view sheds from the North Geologic Window and the cones of the northern most Volcanoes to the Sandia Mountains and the Rio Grande;
- Providing ample open space, particularly in the developed areas on the west side of the Plan Area
- Including a plant list for the open space and conservation areas drawn from native species in the area;
- Encouraging adequate jobs-housing balance and enhanced opportunities for walking, biking, lanes set aside for High Occupancy Vehicles (HOV), and transit trips to reduce congestion and pollution;
- Establishing plazas that focus the active life of the community, including young people in school.

## Exhibit 6

### Paths

These are included in the Plan not just because they reflect traditional values, but also because they incorporate good planning principles.

The Volcano Heights Plan will only succeed through resident and user acceptance of the principles guiding it. Celestino Gachupin of Zia Pueblo has said: “The petroglyphs... belong to all of us now, not only the native people, ... the individual family that has a home that abuts the monument ...you are our eyes and ears now, as far as ensuring that nothing bad happens to the place.” All must become caretakers, recognizing and understanding the importance of the place to all people, and respecting it. Volcano Heights should continue to be a healing place for the entire community, encouraging better balance with the environment and with one another.

### 3. TREATMENT OF NATURAL FEATURES

#### *Drainage channels*

The Monument and affiliated City open space create a major natural ecosystem for Albuquerque. At the heart of the ecosystem are the Boca Negra/Mariposa arroyos, making up a 21 square-mile watershed. **Exhibit 7 Parks and Natural Drainages** shows the natural arroyos and drainage systems traversing the area. The watershed is generally bounded by the Calabacillas Arroyo basin on the north and the San Antonio arroyo basin on the south. The developed watershed channel extends to a small area below the escarpment and into the Mariposa Detention Basin.

The AMAFCA master plan for stormwater drainage provides for a regional detention basin at Unser and Universe, but does not detail all stormwater facilities. **Exhibit 8 Stormwater Infrastructure** shows the constructed drainage facilities. While some of the area’s stormwater runoff will need to flow to engineered pipes and channels, some parts of the different Boca Negra arroyos courses can continue to act as natural drainage facilities. The arroyos may function as stormwater facilities so long as the preserved swath is wide enough to carry 100-year flows. In addition, AMAFCA requires management and maintenance of the arroyos so that no alterations reduce the flow capacity the arroyos have been planned to carry.

Drainage channels have played an important cultural role for prehistoric communities, connecting ceremonial sites on the volcanic mesa through the Escarpment to former Pueblo villages along the Rio Grande.

While the key geologic and cultural features have been set aside as public open space, urbanization around these wilderness areas will dramatically change them. Urbanization that disconnects or destroys the interconnected arroyos and rivers reduces the viability of plant and animal species. Preserving the arroyos not only maintains the richest habitat, but also the very features that ecologically link the largest expanses of open space to each other. To the east, the ecosystem is largely cut off in Taylor Ranch. However, to the west, the opportunity still remains to link the ecosystem to the Rio Puerco wilderness.

The open space that exists within and adjacent to the study area is not consolidated into an overall connected and consolidated network. Under current plans, drainage channels are not being used to their potential as walking and biking trails that could link the natural open areas.



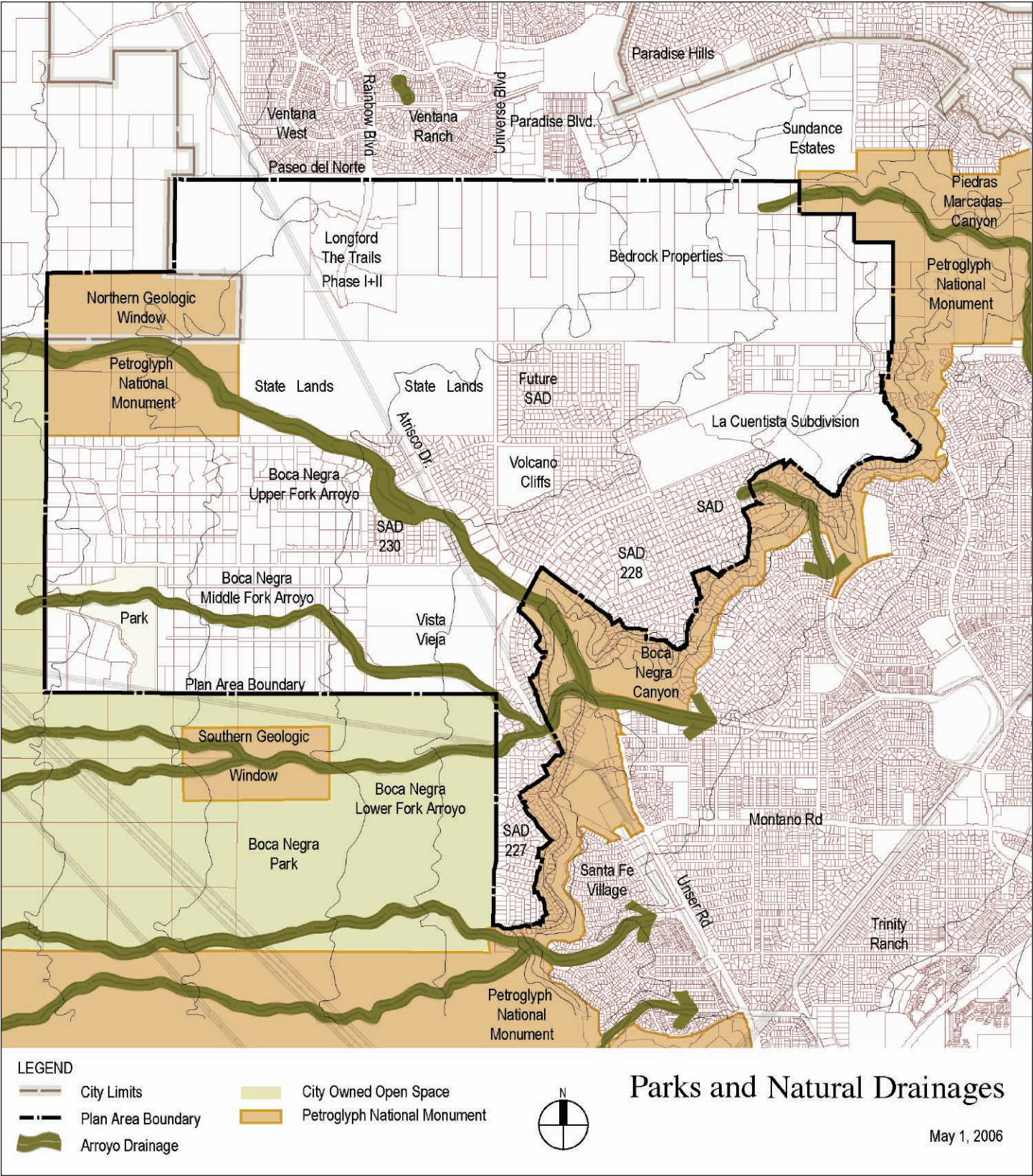


Exhibit 7